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Author contributions

K.H. drafted the manuscript and all authors contributed substantially to the conception and revision of the work. All authors approved the final version of the manuscript.

Declaration of interest

M.R.B. reports personal fees from the Medical Defence Union, from Oxford University Press, and from Cambridge University Press, outside the submitted work.

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poem

Pareidolia

Richard Kravitz

Did you know that if you
Separated all the states
From the US map, like
Disassembling a puzzle,
And then arranged and colored them in,
Just the right way,
They could look like faces?
Funny faces, for sure, but still,
Recognizable faces.

Did you know that if you went
To a really dark place, where there were
No lights anywhere, like the North Pole,
And looked up at the starry night
You could see a circus of Gods,
Of great heroes and heroines?

Did you know that when you're scared,
You can look up at the trees in the late evening
And see really scary faces,
Or sometimes, even in your bedroom at night,
If you're scared enough, the shadows
Look like faces?

So maybe, if you had the right
Microscope, and you looked
Into the deepest, darkest truth of life,
– I guess deepest means smallest
If it's a microscope – maybe you would see
Faces, not chromosomes.

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